

REMARKS

Claim Summary

Claims 6, 7, 9-24, 47-54, 67-69, and 73-76 are pending in this patent application. Claims 73 and 74 stand withdrawn per the Examiner. Claims 1-5, 8, 25-46, 55-66, and 70-72 were previously canceled. No claims are amended.

The Office Action stated that claims 6, 7, 9-13, 15-19, 22-24, 47-54, 67-69, and 73-76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0027639 to Peterson et al. (hereinafter “Peterson”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0003988 to Walker et al. (hereinafter “Walker”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,771,353 to Eggleston et al. (hereinafter “Eggleston”).

The Office Action stated that claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson in view of Walker and Eggleston and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,345,297 to Grimm et al. (hereinafter “Grimm”).

The Office Action stated that claims 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson in view of Walker and Eggleston and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,638,170 to Crumby (hereinafter “Crumby”).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the reasons discussed below.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank Examiner Pinheiro for participating in a brief telephonic Examiner Interview conducted on November 9, 2011. Examiner Pinheiro and Applicants’ Representative Christian Scholz participated. Claims 75 and 76 were discussed.

Mr. Scholz noted that while the addition of claims 75 and 76 were acknowledged by the Examiner as being newly added, and were included in the statement of rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Peterson, Walker, and Eggleston, there was no discussion of the recited features of claims 75 and 76 anywhere in the rejection.

Examiner Pinheiro indicated that this was an oversight and agreed to issue a new Final Rejection which would take the place of the August 18, 2011, Final Rejection, and which would include discussion of claims 75 and 76. Agreement was also reached that the finality of the August 18, 2011, Final Rejection was improper, and that it would be withdrawn or otherwise obviated.

Mr. Scholz indicated that he would file the present response if a new Final Rejection had not been received by the three-month date. Applicants appreciate Examiner Pinheiro’s handling of the matter, and look forward to receiving further communications from the Examiner.

Withdrawn Claims

In the November 26, 2010, Office Action, claims 73 and 74 were restricted out. Applicants traversed these restrictions in the Amendment filed February 28, 2011. The March 14, 2011, Office Action indicated that the restriction had not been withdrawn because Applicants' traversal was no persuasive. The March 14, 2011, Office Action also indicated that the restriction had been made final.

Applicants then amended claims 73 and 74 in the May 19, 2011, Amendment, and requested reconsideration of the restriction requirement in light of the amendments made. While it appears that Applicants' amendments were successful in this regard since there is no further mention of the restriction requirement per claims 73 and 74 and since claims 73 and 74 are included in the Statement of Rejection on page 2 of the present Office Action, there is no formal indication as to the status of the previously-issued restriction.

Applicants request that some clarification be provided as to the status of the previous restriction with regard to claims 73 and 74.

Rejections

As the present Office Action is incomplete, Applicants do not respond to the rejections in the Office Action at this time and will do so when the second Final Rejection is received.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees, including any extension fees, which may be required or credit any overpayment directly to the account of the undersigned, No. 504480 (Order No. IGT1P213/P000657-001).

Respectfully submitted,
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